



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
Carlsbad Field Office
2730 Loker Avenue West
Carlsbad, California 92008

May 14, 1997

Gretchen Softley
City of San Diego - Engineering/Design Division
1010 Second Avenue, Suite 1200
San Diego, California 92101-4905

Re: State Route 905, Otay Mesa, California

Dear Ms. Softley :

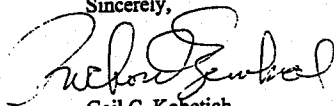
The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the figures and data provided by Helix Environmental dated March 25, 1997 with regards to the north, central, and south alignments of the Route 905 freeway alternative. The Service requested this information from Caltrans in a meeting on March 24, 1997.

The Service concurs that these three alignments should be carried forward as alternatives into the draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS). The impacts to the vegetation communities within the project site vary only slightly between each of the three alignments. The northern alignment impacts approximately 11 acres of coastal sage scrub whereas the central and southern alignments impact approximately 16 acres. With regards to wetlands, including vernal pools, the central alignment impacts the smallest acreage. Given the rarity of vernal pools and the intent of the 404 b(1) guidelines, the central alignment should be the preferred alignment.

The Service will work with the City and Caltrans to develop measures that would minimize the impacts to the upland habitat types, and in particular coastal sage scrub. Also of concern in the western portion of the alignment is the maintenance of a viable wildlife corridor within Spring Canyon and the impacts to the MSCP preserve. Any area of the preserve lands that are impacted or fragmented by the freeway would have to be offset elsewhere in areas currently slated for development.

If you have any question with regards to this letter, please contact Ms. Nancy Gilbert or Ms. Susan Wynn at (760) 431-9440.

Sincerely,


for Gail C. Kobetich
Field Supervisor

cc: Corps of Engineers (attn: D. Zoutendyk)
CalTrans (attn: C. White)



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JUL 15 1998

John P. Rieger, Chief
Environmental Stewardship Branch
Caltrans - District 11
P.O. Box 85406
San Diego, CA 92186-5406

Re: NEPA/404 Permit Concurrent Process for State Route 905

Dear Mr. Rieger:

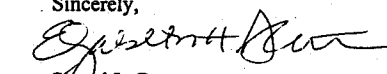
The Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the materials provided to us in a letter dated April 27, 1998 regarding the proposed extension of State Route 905 (SR-905) from Interstate 805 eastward to the Otay Mesa Port-of-Entry. Your letter requested agreement from the resource agencies on the following issues:

1. NEPA Purpose and Need/404 basic and overall project purpose
2. Criteria for alternative selection
3. Project alternatives to be evaluated in the Draft EIS
4. Level of agency involvement and cooperation agency role.

The Service concurs with the basic and overall project purpose and the proposed criteria for alternative selection. With regards to issue 3, the Service has already provided you with a letter, dated May 14, 1997, regarding our position on the alternatives as it relates to the three alignment variations, however we did not address the proposed alternative project designs. It appears that three alternative project designs are being considered in the short term, however ultimately all three alternatives become an eight-lane freeway and therefore will have the same impacts. There was not enough information provided in your letter to evaluate whether these three project designs are acceptable. In addition, it is not clear to us how the Major Investment Study relates to this project and whether those alternatives should be included in this project.

With regards to participating as a cooperating agency, the Service is available for review of any documents and can provide technical expertise as it relates to natural resources. If you have any questions with regards to this letter, please contact Ms. Susan Wynn at (760) 431-9440.

Sincerely,


Sheryl L. Barrett
Assistant Field Supervisor